

Advancement Committee Annual Report May 1, 2017 – August 31, 2018

Current Goals:

(Submitted to UC in September 2017)

Goal/Metric	Accomplished	In Progress	Not Accomplished
Improve the way students are made aware of scholarships, focusing on scholarships with specific requirements that may go un-awarded.		X	
Create a toolkit of best practices for those in colleges/departments who process scholarship applications and awards. Facilitate communication between these employees for additional support.		X	
Increase the standardization of processes and messaging regarding scholarships among the colleges.		X	

What were your top two successes?

1. The committee spent a lot of time collecting information from colleges and departments to understand and document current scholarship-related processes. For the same reason we also interviewed Mary Schadle from Financial Aid multiple times, since she is integral to the process for all colleges and understands the challenges at the heart of these processes. This information has been analyzed and has enabled the committee to determine the best way to move forward with these goals.

2. The committee has made a lot of progress on the toolkit that we are creating for employees who play a role in these processes. It has not been finished, but design decisions have been made, the layout established, and about half of the content has been created. Plans for implementing the toolkit have been formed, including plans to have the committee start hosting a regular (annual? TBD) event, which will gather the employees who deal with scholarships to provide information and discuss current issues with the processes.

What were your top two challenges?

1. Complexity - The process of awarding scholarships is incredibly complex due to several factors. The individual needs of each college drive differing timelines. The scholarship cap requires an extra eligibility verification step, and the cap itself differs from student to student. The Akron Guarantee Scholarship's automatic increases mean that administrators cannot simply assume that a student's scholarship can be renewed from year-to-year. Fund availability varies from year-to-year based on market performance.

Employee turnover has complicated these underlying complexities, since we have found that many people who touch these processes find them murky in one or more ways.

2. Breadth of work needed – The committee has many ideas to improve the way that students are made aware of available scholarships (Goal #1). However, these ideas involve tagging every scholarship in such a way as to make it easily searchable, and creating an online tool capable of this search. This is an incredibly large task, and would require a coordinated project between IT and Development that would require significant time to plan and implement. The University Webteam is willing to help if a feasible plan can be developed, but the committee has realized that what is needed will take longer than one year to accomplish. More effort has been put into making progress on Goals 2 and 3 for this reason.

Please list the dates of your meetings:

5/11, 6/16, 8/4, 9/1, 10/6, 12/1, 2/2, 5/4, 7/13

(Some committee members have been meeting outside of regular committee meetings to develop content for our toolkit.)